

January 9, 1941, letter from H.M. Bond to Alan Lomax

The Fort Valley State College Fort Valley, Georgia

January 9, 1941

Mr Allen Lomax Library of Congress Division of Folk Music Washington, D C

Dear Mr Lomax:

I write to invite you to come to Fort Valley on March 6–9, if possible, to participate in our Second Annual Folk Festival.

Last year when we instituted this Folk Festival, we had as our principal guest, Mr W C Handy, the composer of The Saint Louis Blues. We made a special effort to find Negro Folk musicians from the surrounding countryside, in fact, from all over the state of Georgia. Among the persons who took part were two very fine string bands, some ten or fifteen guitarists and banjoists and several performers on improvised instruments. We also had a sacred program, in which from six to seven rural church choirs participated.

It is our hope, this year, to reach even a larger number of contestants and to make of this an outstanding feature in which it is one of the few occasions when folk performers are, not only welcome to, but are happy to come to a college campus, to lend emphasis both to our appreciation of their efforts, but also to a greater interest on the part of the general public in the preservation of these materials. I am sure that you would find it personally very interesting, and might be able to pick up some interesting materials in addition. We should be very happy to have you come to us, and we should also be happy to have the names of other leading musical folk-laureates who we might invite to this occasion. I might also add that we had hoped to have Mr Carl Sandburg with us, but a conflict with lecture

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engagements prevented his appearance, at this particular time, although he has promised to be with us sometime during the year.

Thanking you for an early answer and hoping that you can arrange to come, I am

Sincerely yours, H. M. Bond H. M. Bond, President.